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## How to Backup a PC

Everyone thinks, 'it won't happen to me'. But what if it does? All your files, pictures and documents gone, in an instant. Sure, you can reach for the disks that came with your computer to reinstall the applications but what about the most important component, your data? Data backup is something too many computer owners ignore.

There are a number of things that can bring down your computer, some of which include a power surge, hard drive crash, careless mistakes, viruses, a fire or theft.

If your system did not come with a recovery disc, you should consider making a backup disc as soon as possible. This is important should you ever need to rebuild your system to its "as bought" condition.

How often you back up your data varies from person to person. It depends on the volume of data input, frequency of change, and the nature of your data. A general rule of thumb would be to back up anything that would be difficult and time-consuming to re-create.

How to backup data:

If you have Windows XP, it includes backup software; however, if you're running on Home Edition, it isn't installed by default. Once the software is installed, go to the Start menu and choose "accessories", then "system tools", then "backup" in order to run the backup wizard. On the final screen, you can press the "advanced" button which will allow you to automatically schedule recurring backups. The wizard also allows you to create a system recovery disc which will enable you to boot and rescue your data should Windows get damaged. At the end of this article, you will find a list of programs and software that can do the data backup for you.

You may think you'd like to back up everything you have in your computer. However, there is no need to back up software and applications since these can be reinstalled with the original discs. Most Windows programs now have a default for storing data within your user profile.

Backup programs:

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## Menu:

- [→ Spyware](#)
- [→ Registry Cleaner](#)
- [→ Computer Virus](#)
- [→ Mortgages](#)
- [→ Debt Consolidation](#)
- [→ Domains](#)
- [→ Webhosting](#)
- [→ Auto Financing](#)
- [→ Auto Insurance](#)
- [→ Weight Loss](#)
- [→ Visa](#)
- [→ Attorney](#)
- [→ Home Business](#)
- [→ Price Comparison](#)
- [→ Student Loans](#)
- [→ Spyware Remover](#)
- [→ Gift Card](#)
- [→ Adwords](#)
- [→ Ebay](#)
- [→ Cell Phone](#)
- [→ Ring Tone](#)

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- [Speed Up Your Computer](#)
- [Windows XP Repair](#)
- [Ask the Nerd](#)
- [What's On TV ?](#)
- [Classic Movies](#)
- [Consumer Review](#)
- [Website Studio](#)
- [Funny Stuff](#)

There are a number of programs that perform data backup for you, some of which are described here. Ghost 9.0 creates full drive images, IBackup copies files to remote databases, and Dantz's Retrospect Professional 6.5 is a traditional backup tool. There is also free software available for data backup. For instance, Backup4 protects your data and features an easy backup wizard that allows you to schedule backups whenever you like. Disk Tools Image Maker is an easy-to-use disk imaging tool which allows you to create exact images of your entire drive. It works directly from within Windows so there is no need to boot from a floppy. Handy Backup is another software which makes an automatic backup of critical data to any type of storage medium.

#### Backup Tips:

Here are a few tips to keep in mind regarding data backup:

Don't procrastinate. Most people decide to back up their data only after they've experienced a loss!

Try to find a backup software that can hold twice as much as your hard disk so that you're able to schedule backups when you're not there.

Back up only what is necessary. However, if you're not sure, back it up ... better safe than sorry!

#### About The Author

Marisa Pellegrino is a freelance writer from Montreal and is the head researcher and content manager for RAID RECOVERY ([www.raidrecoveryguide.com](http://www.raidrecoveryguide.com)) and other sites.

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